Education

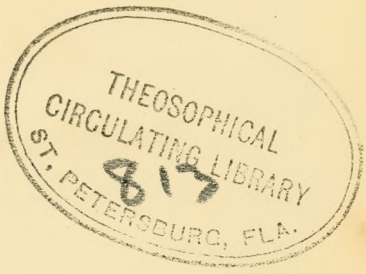
INDIAN EDUCATION FOR INDIA

THE BESANT THEOSOPHICAL SCHOOL

ADYAR, MADRAS

विद्या धर्मेण शोभते

"KNOWLEDGE IS ILLUMINED IN RIGHT ACTION"



THE primary purpose of education is to draw out the whole of the nature of the individual child so that he may unfold harmoniously within himself and harmoniously in relation to his surroundings. Education must above all make increasingly beautiful his own individuality. And then it must help his individuality and his surroundings to interpenetrate with mutual benefit.

The special purpose of education so far as regards India is two-fold : (1) to enable the young Indian citizen—girl or boy—to live in self-contained simplicity a cultured and a fearless life, full of the spirit of Ahimsa or harmlessness where harmlessness is the immemorial tradition, and at the least humane where harmlessness is not enjoined ; (2) to enable the young Indian citizen to live in a spirit of respect and appreciation as regards the habits, customs and faiths of his fellow-citizens, where these differ from his own.

I hold that no education has fulfilled its purpose save as it educates its pupils to live a self-contained and happy life as much from the very moment their educational period of life is over as

in the home and at school and college. One of the disasters of modern education lies in the fact that at their finest period, or at least at one of their finest periods, the young citizens of India, and of most other countries for the matter of that, are discharged bankrupt into the world with no power either to earn their living through some profession or to lead simple and useful lives with a maximum of simplicity either on the land itself—Mother-land as it is—or in such other ways as may be most expedient, at least until an opportunity presents itself for a wider field of activity.

This first consideration is the fact that the HOME is the unit, the setting, of the life of everyone. Education, to be true, must first of all take into consideration the Home whence the student comes, for an essential ingredient of all life in school and in college is to make the home a happier, a more peaceful, and a more prosperous dwelling-place. Where the homes are happy there the nation is contented.

The Indian school and college must become a real home to its teachers and to its pupils, an extension of the family and of the consciousness of the individual pupil.

George S. Arundale

THE BESANT THEOSOPHICAL SCHOOL

An institution based on these principles is our purpose in ***The Besant Theosophical School***, called Theosophical because Theosophy is Brahma Vidya, the Divine Wisdom, whence all other wisdom goes forth. At present, however, the School has no official connection with The Theosophical Society, and no student is asked to become a member. It was Dr. Besant's dying wish that a centre of education for the training of Indian youth should be established at or near Adyar, Madras, which for over a quarter of a century had been her headquarters in India. For nearly forty years Dr. Besant had striven for an Indian education for Indian girls and boys, and had given practical effect to her principles of education in the Central Hindu College at Benares. But she specially had hoped for a truly Indian school at Adyar which she herself could inspire and help. The following beautiful message was dictated by her in the last year of her life towards the end of her long illness :

> *"I have worked long to help the young to be happy and unafraid. Let that work go on, and let the young learn to know of me and of my love for them.*
>
> *Specially work to keep away fear from the little ones everywhere for the young must grow happily even though we must not always allow them to do just what they want."*

The Besant Theosophical School, founded by Dr. George S. Arundale, is therefore Dr. Besant's legacy to us all, and those who recognize her great services to India will be eager to do all they can to build worthily this memorial to her—the memorial she herself chose.

How then does it seek to become a worthy memorial?

1. By standing for the spirit of the Indian Home throughout Indian education.

It should be clearly understood that *The Besant Theosophical School* is not a reformatory for backward or difficult students, but an opportunity for girls and boys who are of, or above, the average level of intelligence, and whose characters will grow in an atmosphere of freedom and friendship.

2. By standing, therefore, for the education of reverence, comradeship and compassion, these being the three principal pillars upon which the Indian home and the whole of Indian life should be built.

First, through the education of the spirit of Reverence for ideals, greatness, beauty, truth and all that is sacred in life: and towards teachers, parents and age.

Second, through the education of the spirit of Comradeship; expressed in mutual friendship without distinction of religion or of race. To this end religious education is given in all the faiths.

Third, through the education of the spirit of Compassion; through practical sympathy for the poor, the weak and the oppressed, and a practical feeling of tenderness for animals and for all other living creatures.

3. By fostering the spirit of chivalrous fearlessness.

4. By the training of character through culture.

The impetus for this is largely contributed by Rukmini Devi through *The International Academy of the Arts* which works in perfect accord and closest co-operation with the school. As time progresses she hopes to include this aspect of education more and more prominently in her work, and so to help to provide that spiritual and cultural background which is so essential for every individual, and therefore in his education.

The International Academy founded by Rukmini Devi has, as its objects (1) To emphasize the unity of all true art. (2) To work for the recognition of the Arts as inherent in individual, national, religious and international growth.

5. By educating the individual in self-contentment, so that he learns to be happy from within rather than to be dependent upon external circumstances.

6. To educate every young Indian citizen in the spirit and practice of wise and eager patriotism, so that in becoming a good citizen of himself he becomes a good citizen of his country, were possible also realizing something of the nature of world citizenship.

The young girl or boy must be equipped to live in this modern world in a practical efficiency based on the spirit of those great ideals of living which are limited by no distinctions of time, or race, or faith, or nationality, or caste, or any other circumstances.

The Besant Theosophical School seeks to educate these principles in the setting of a truly Indian simplicity of daily life—healthy, helpful, and therefore happy and beautiful.

So far the School has made no appeal for assistance from those who so obviously would desire to help in its work and growth, but now that it has been comparatively successful and has received the very appreciative recognition of the Government of Madras, the time has come for the memorial to be placed on a sound basis in all respects.

To this end, and to develop this school into a college and some day into a university, thus to grow into a great Centre of Citizenship first of the Motherland and then of the world, the following are our needs :

Land where we can plan a perfect village community which will include :

1. A Temple for all religions
2. Educational activities
3. Hostels for boys and girls
4. Teachers' quarters
5. Dispensary and sickrooms
6. Gymnasiums
7. Laundry
8. Dairy
9. Animal Hospital
10. A model village for workers
11. The department of the arts and the International Academy
12. Theatre

		Rs.
200 acres of land at Rs. 500	....	100,000
Temple	....	50,000
Hostels	....	150,000
Chemistry Laboratory Equipment	....	5,000

		Rs.
Physics Laboratory Equipment	....	5,000
Botany ,, ,,	....	5,000
Geography and History ,,	....	2,000
Teaching apparatus including arts and crafts	....	7,000
Montessori Department	....	2,000
Furniture	....	10,000
Library of 3000 volumes	....	10,000
Theatre	....	25,000
Scholarship Endowment to the value of Rs. 25 per mensem (per scholarship)....		7,500
General Endowment	....	300,000
Total Rs.	....	678,500

Donors are invited to contribute towards any particular department of the work in which they are particularly interested. Where no indication is made by the donor, gifts will be used for general purposes. Gifts such as books, scientific apparatus, arts and crafts equipment, office equipment, dispensary, sickroom and hospital supplies, etc., etc., will also be very welcome.

Patrons of the School are :

Dr. Rabindranath Tagore
Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar
The Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri

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